

Advanced Civil Schooling (ACS)

ACS is an essential part of the three-part FAO training program (language studies, ACS, and In-Country Training). In order to serve as regional specialists, officers receive master's degrees through the Army's fully-funded ACS program. Schools our officers attend are carefully screened to ensure student officers receive high quality education in regional studies and language skills. This program requires a significant amount of personal initiative on the part of officers. To a large extent, officers determine which program they attend. The following answers to common questions should help future student officers make sound decisions.

- ? **How do I choose a graduate school?** Carefully! *Choose a program for the right reasons.* Making choices based on a desire to go to school near your hometown, or because you don't want to PCS is probably not good decision making. For most, this is a once-in-a-lifetime event. Choose a quality program! Of course, we do provide certain guidelines (see below). Bottom line: *get into the best school you can.* Get good, solid letters of recommendation. Take and re-take the GRE, if necessary. Maximize the opportunity.
- ? **What are the guidelines for graduate school selection?** The program must meet basic three requirements – (1) be no longer than 18 months, (2) be a program that meets our quality standards, and (3) be within the funding cap. The Proponent publishes an Approved Schools List, available through the Civil Schooling page of this web site. FAOs will apply to and receive acceptance to a minimum of three schools on this list. Officer applying to the Naval Post Graduate School will submit their applications through PERSCOM. Officers are free to choose schools that are not on this list, but the applicant must prove to both the Proponent and PERSCOM that that institution meets our three requirements.
- ? **When do I apply?** Apply to graduate schools at least one year out, more if you're on ICT. Once you get accepted, forward your DA 1618-R (Application for detail as a Student Officer at a Civilian Educational Institution) with letters of acceptance to your training technician at PERSCOM not later than six months prior to the ACS start date. Remember, once you are accepted you can always defer attendance.
- ? **I want to apply to a school that is not on the ACS Approved Schools List, and it is over the 14.5K cap. What can I do?** *First, ensure they know you're a FAO.* Inquire as to whether the institution will lower their tuition rates for you. Many colleges value and seek FAO students. They frequently will work with a potential student to bring costs within the cap. Many institutions have granted fellowships to FAOs. Attending a university that offers in state tuition reductions is another common way FAOs can attend higher cost schools.
- ? **How are officers selected for graduate school?** PERSCOM selects officers for fully-funded ACS based on a number of considerations - academic and military records, performance, and potential for continued service.

- ? **How does PERSCOM choose which school I'll attend?** PERSCOM considers the officer's preferences, while weighing the relative quality and cost of the programs. PERSCOM will consult the Proponent in special cases involving exceptions to policy. They make a decision based upon these considerations. *The key here is to ensure that you are happy with all of your choices.*
- ? **What service obligation do I incur in attending fully-funded ACS?** Officers agree to serve a period equal to three times the length of schooling, IAW AR 350-100. Officers who fail to complete this obligation will be required to reimburse the Army for this education.
- ? **Where can I get further information on ACS?** DA Pam 600-3 (Officer Professional Development), AR 621-11 (Training of Military Personnel at Civilian Institutions) are excellent sources of information on ACS.

The benefits you'll get from ACS will enhance your career and your life. Don't sell yourself short.